



**U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement**

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News Release

ICE ARRESTS 9 IN OHIO FRAUD DRIVER'S LICENSE SCHEME

Middle Eastern men received fake licenses Individuals paid between \$200 and \$500

CINCINNATI—A multi-agency investigation, headed by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) special agents, led to the arrest of nine people today for a scheme to fraudulently obtain Ohio driver's licenses.

These arrests took place following a 14-count indictment from the U.S. Attorney's Office, Southern District of Ohio.

Tammy Black, 40, an employee of the deputy registrar for the Ohio Bureau of Motor Vehicles (BMV) is charged with all 14-counts in a scheme designed to assist Middle Eastern men with fraudulently obtaining Ohio driver's licenses or Ohio identification cards in Cincinnati from March to September 2004. The other person involved in running this scheme was Mohammad (aka Mike) Shalash, 30, a citizen of Jordan, who is still at large. The other eight people arrested—and six others still at large—had fraudulently received an Ohio driver's license or identification through this scheme.

The ICE investigation revealed that men would contact Shalash to purchase Ohio identity cards. They would pay Shalash between \$200 and \$300 for an Ohio driver's license. Shalash was instructed by Black to visit the BMV office with the purchaser when her supervisors were at lunch. Black would fill out the application, falsifying that sufficient documentation was received demonstrating legal residence or citizenship of the United States. In exchange for falsifying this information, Shalash paid Black with \$10 phone cards. None of the individuals arrested today who benefited from this scheme were eligible to receive this benefit through the State of Ohio as a foreign national. At least six of the 13 people charged in the indictment with fraudulently receiving Ohio documents are illegal aliens.

"This is an excellent example of cooperative law enforcement working together to obstruct individuals attempting to exploit a vulnerability in our security efforts," said Brian M. Moskowitz, special agent-in-charge, ICE Detroit Office of Investigations. "We will continue to apply all resources available to stop organized criminal groups and individuals from abusing our system."

"The execution of these warrants sends a clear message that we will not tolerate the use of fraudulent driver licenses and other fabricated government documents," Ohio Attorney General Jim Petro said. "Today's action helps to ensure the integrity and security of the documents used to identify us as legal citizens of Ohio and the United States."

"The Bureau has an important role in overseeing how deputy registrar offices implement homeland security procedures" said Kenneth L. Morckel, director of the Ohio Department of Public Safety, which oversees the Bureau of Motor Vehicles. "We will continue to do everything in our power to investigate and prosecute those responsible for crimes like these."

This investigation is ongoing.

The Ohio Organized Crime Investigation Commission (OOIC), Bureau of Motor Vehicles, Cincinnati Police Department, U.S. Marshal Service, and ICE's Federal Protective Service provided assistance with this investigation.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of five integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.